

## **Update from the Weir Meadow Working Group (WMWG) and Joint Projects Fund Raising Group (JPFRG)**

Since the last update (9<sup>th</sup> November) two further meetings of the WMWG and JPFRG have taken place (15<sup>th</sup> November and 12<sup>th</sup> December). This update covers the period from mid-November 2022 to mid-January 2023.

### **Access arrangements**

A stile at the upper entrance from College Lane to Northern Fields; and a pedestrian gate in the gap in the hedge at the lower entrance (NE corner of Eastern Northern Field) have been installed. The works were undertaken by Will Bosworth for a quoted cost of £1600 inclusive of VAT (the IPC can reclaim VAT of approx. £150 on materials). Signage, as agreed with IPC, has been put in place by Nick Bradley at WM entrance, WM & NF junction, and both NF entrances off College Lane.

Two new dog waste bins (one at the entrance to Weir Meadow, the other at the upstream end of College Lane ford) have kindly been installed by Nick Bradley.

### **Oak (scrub) Bank**

Following a decision by IPC (16<sup>th</sup> November), flailing works were undertaken on Oak Bank over the weekend of the 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> December, with a couple of extra hours on Monday (19<sup>th</sup>) morning, due to a late start on the 17<sup>th</sup>. Thanks very much to Peter Skinner for organising and spending most of a cold Saturday and wet Sunday checking that the works progressed smoothly. Tree saplings (52 in total, approximately 40 of which are oak) were taped a couple of days before the works and appear to have survived unscathed. These will now need to be protected with guards to prevent any grazing damage by rabbits and deer.

Stuart Brooking has opened up a gap in the dividing hedge in N Fields close to the junction with WM, so that people can walk along the southern margin of the Eastern N Field to Oak Bank.

An application to enter Oak Bank into the Forestry Commission England Woodland Creation Offer is currently being developed.

### **National Lottery Community Fund and Woodland Trust**

An application to the small grants section was submitted on the 23<sup>rd</sup> November by David Howe on behalf of the IPC/WMWG. The fantastic news that the application was successful was received last week (14<sup>th</sup> January)! The grant of £9825 will go towards / pay for fencing and tree planting (mainly along the brook), an interpretation board, bird and dormouse nest boxes, benches for oak bank and possibly infill works to the meadow entrance. Planning to start these works will start shortly (e.g. tree planting will need to be undertaken before the end of March).

In addition, an application to the Woodland Trust for one of their community tree packs was also successful. This will provide 420 saplings (mixed species), guards and canes that can be planted in Weir Meadow (along Fordland Brook). The pack will be delivered before the end of March and we will be arranging a volunteer tree planting day (or two!) to get these in before Spring really kicks in.

## **Football and Cricket Pitches**

Andrew Ash and Rich Cloke have met Nick Goodliffe (NG) of Devon Cricket who has inspected the site.

In the absence of junior or women's programmes, NG advised that there will be no funding available from Devon Cricket. This does not mean that funding will be closed from Sport England or the National Lottery or indeed elsewhere. NG did however provide useful advice and guidance suggesting that the Club calls on the services of the Grounds Management Association and gets specific advice from their Regional Pitch Advisors on the possibilities of development. Support from Sport England would require compliance with the English Cricket Board specifications for the construction and maintenance of pitches. It would appear that most of the grant money available is for facilities rather than groundworks. Further investigation is being undertaken to determine the extent of drainage works required and what is appropriate and proportionate for a village pitch.

Stuart Brooking has contacted the Football Foundation about funding of works to create a football pitch. The Football Foundation has responded and states that it would not be able to fund any drainage / levelling works for a new pitch, unless there is already a team using a facility. Once a pitch is being used by an affiliated team then an application can be made to the Grass Pitch Maintenance Fund that could unlock an annual amount to support the maintenance and improvement of the playing surface. This response suggests that the football club (as well as the IPC) would have to find the money to create a playing area before any additional funding could be unlocked. It might be more beneficial / economical to undertake levelling, drainage and reseeding works for both the cricket and football pitches (i.e. the whole of WM) in one go rather than solely undertaking some initial works to create an interim playable football pitch (which might then have to be ripped up again to create a more permanent surface). Representatives from the two sports clubs will investigate this further and develop a plan to determine the most effective (and economical) way of undertaking the groundworks etc. to create playable surfaces for both cricket and football.

## **Fundraising and volunteering**

Rachel Herbert has formed a WM Volunteers' WhatsApp Group for various odd jobs which will need to be undertaken. Rachel has also applied for and obtained from the Environment Agency (with behind the scenes help from Rich Cloke) a licence to burn arisings from tree pruning and a licence to use recycled aggregates in the construction of the car park and surrounds.

Cheryl Haddy and Richard Sharman have been investigating the logistics of setting up and promoting a fundraising concert by Police Dog Hogan. The band has agreed to play for free, but venue (West Town Farm) and lighting/staging costs (approx. 3k) would need to be covered. Ticket and catering/bar revenues from the event could be significant and lead to a very healthy profit that would be used to fund the Green Space for Ide projects. Richard Sharman has kindly agreed to underwrite the set up costs.

The next combined meeting of WMWG and JPFRG is scheduled for Monday 13th February 2023, 7:30pm via Zoom.

From Richard Cottle, Chair WMWG – 16<sup>th</sup> January, 2023.